

GILA NATIONAL FOREST



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Don't Let Autumn Fool You!

Fire Danger on Gila National Forest is *HIGH!*

Silver City, NM—It is dry on the Gila National Forest; the current fire danger is *High!* Since early October, the Forest has had two human-caused wildland fires due to below average rainfall received this past summer and the dry winter of 2010/2011 when minimal snow was received. The most recent human caused fire was reported today and is called the Terry Fire; the other fire was the Gallinas Canyon Fire reported on October 2nd at 0.1 acre.

Although the Terry Fire is also at 0.1 acre, there is a strong message here that clearly indicates how high the fire danger is and how easily a fire can start! We ask forest visitors to continue being extremely careful with any ignition source that can start a wildfire and to practice aggressive fire prevention," says Forest Supervisor Kelly Russell.

The Terry Fire is located about 3 ½ miles northeast from the junction of NM 35 and Forest Road (FR) 150. It is on the west side of FR 150 and a mile past North Star Mesa. Firefighters have been dispatched to suppress the fire.

"Wildfires during the autumn months are not common as the monsoon rains of July through mid-September normally have passed with the summer rains greening up the forest. But with the below average summer rainfall and the past dry winter, the grasses, shrubs, and forest ground litter such as pine needles and branches are already dry and brittle," adds Forest Supervisor Russell.

Fire prevention tips to follow when visiting the forest or other public lands:

- When finished with the use of a campfire, completely extinguish it by drowning the fire with water, stirring it, and drowning it again. Never leave a campfire unattended!
- Be careful with outdoor appliances such as gas lanterns, barbeques, gas stoves, and anything that can be a source of ignition for a wildfire.
- Park vehicles *away* from dry grass and avoid driving through tall grass.
- Dispose of a lit cigarette or other smoking materials appropriately.

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